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**THE SELF-ESTEEM OF THE TEACHERS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION  
IN PORTUGAL**

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**Abstract**

Our professional practice in institutions of the training of teachers on Physical Education, has contributed for a bigger attention and concern with inborn questions to the definition of the teaching identity. In order to study these questions, we developed the present study. Appealing to a methodology of qualitative form, this study has been centered in a group of fifteen teachers with distinct training in the Physical Education area in the most known institutions in Portugal. We conclude that teachers, independently of their school of teaching and their professional experience, define themselves as good teachers, assuring to possess good pedagogical capacities, looking forward to promote the learning's and to develop the capacities of the pupils.

**Keywords:** physical education, teachers, identity, self-esteem.

**1. Legitimation**

It was only in the decade of the seventies of the last century that the first studies on critical and interpretative analysis of the history of the physical education took place in Portugal (Crespo, 1976; 1991). When studying the training and the construction of the identity of teachers of physical education in Portugal, we evidence that both have come to suffer throughout the twentieth century, some influences and changes, following the historical evolution, in its social dimension, politics, economical, educative, cultural and scientific (Rosário, 1996).

Indeed, the investigation on a professional identity of the teacher of physical education is figured as a complicated task. To study the teaching profession and its professional identity implies the recognition of the diversity that characterizes this professional group (Kelchtermans, 1993; Kelchtermans e Vandenberghe, 1994). As Nóvoa (1992) relates, to feel like a teacher or to assume themselves as teachers, is the result of a progressive process, constructed day by day and throughout the years, since the moment of the option for the teaching profession.

Therefore, since the individual differences until the group differences or affinities that distinguish, approach or oppose individuals in relation to the others in the breast of the same profession, it is possible to find a great diversity of variables that support this heterogeneity or homogeneity. Among others changeable, we considered as determinative the passage of training of the teacher of physical education. This variable seems to us, to be of a special importance related to heterogeneity /homogeneity, because the fact that their exists, currently, a proliferation of institutions of initial training in the domain of the physical education, ones with more prestige of what others, and with a faculty with very distinct qualifications, as much in the public sector as in the private one, concurs,

in our opinion, for the emergency of identities that admit ambiguities. It was on the basis of these predictable, that we looked forward to develop a study that analyzed the way that teachers of physical education if they evaluate while teachers of this area, studying the consequence of its initial training in the definition of its teaching identity.

## 2. Methodology

In this study we basically, intend, and as already referenced, to analyze as a group of teachers of physical education of basic and secondary portuguese schools evaluate themselves, attending to their different initial training and the diversity of experiences that they had lived deeply. The nature of this investigation took us to consider it pertinent a qualitative study, where the direct speech submits to a interpretative logic, that, when fitting and explaining the position of the interviewed teachers, it intends to give account as the teachers of physical education evaluate themselves in the current portuguese school context. Pointing out to us, therefore, in a frame of a not positive and interpretative paradigm of phenomenological and ideographical nature (Cohen and Manion, 1990) we appeal, in this inquiry, to a methodology of qualitative care that puts the tonic in the revalorization of the “person”, as subject of knowledge capable to reflect, to rationalize, to communicate and to interact (Pujadas Munoz, 1992).

Our sample was constituted by a group of fifteen teachers (Figure 1) with distinct initial training of the approved area to the discipline of Physical Education in the institutions well known of our country during the twentieth century: the *National Institute of Physical Education*, created in 1940; the *School of Instructors of Physical Education of Porto and Lisbon*; the *Superior Institute of Physical Education* of Lisbon and Porto; and the *Faculties of Sciences, Sport and Physical Education*, created from the beginning of years 90.

E2, E13, E14	Instituto Nacional de Educação Física (INEF)
E10, E12	Escola Instrutores de Educação Física (EIEF)
E1, E4, E7, E8, E10, E11	Instituto Superior de Educação Física (ISEF)
E3, E5, E6, E9, E15	Faculdades de Desporto e Educação Física (FAC)

Figure 1: Codes of Interview and Institutions of Initial Training

After our decision to study this group of professionals, we proceeded to make a selection not in a arbitrary form and without looking for a objective “representation” of qualitative data character of the methodology. This selection was looking for a guarantee that the biggest possible diversity of experiences and personal characteristics was made on the basis of the passages of initial training (training institutions).

With this procedure we intended that our sample was constituted by teachers who had different training in distinct historical periods, with service time and position in the career differentiated in the direction of approaching them to the concept of sample of the maximum variation.

### **3. Results**

From the analysis carried throughout the interviews, we will be able to verify that it has some aspects that congregate more consensuses or more attention of what others. One of the aspects more consensual is detained with the fact, of the majority of the teachers, independently of the school of training and the professional experience; define as good professionals, having a good image of themselves and of the profession. However, and although this consensus, we notice some differences in the appreciations, since the teachers of the INEF and the EIEF, that is, oldest and with more professional experience, relating that they had always played with enormous professionalism their functions, they only evaluate themselves as reasonable teachers, showing, therefore, some humbleness.

On the other hand, new teachers relating for times soundless to possess progression edging, they have few doubts in affirming to be good responsible teachers. Everything is inferred as if they are more careful, indicating that the time allowed in the distance to see between the possibilities and the difficulties, and others are more confident, wanting to valid their abilities, because its generation perhaps already found another interest for the area, believing that they are enough to affirm themselves and to be recognized as being absolutely necessary in the formation of youngest. In any way, most of these teachers, understand that to possess good pedagogical capacities, allowed them to develop the capacities of their pupils of an adequate form. These, allied abilities to the promotion of the development and the learning of the pupils and to the characteristics of the personality of the teachers and its attitudes are, in the reality, an accordance with Costa (1990) and Carreiro da Costa (1994), the main characteristics associates to the concept of a good teacher.

We can, therefore, conclude, that, even so, the diversity of orientations and conceptions of the Physical Education, in consequence, as much as the teachers formed in the INEF and the ISEF's how much of the growth of schools of training of teachers of physical education in Portugal, during the decade of the nineties of the past century, can have concurred for different perceptions on the form as the suitable teachers may evaluate themselves, they do not seem to express deep and too much harmful cleavages for the affirmation of the identity of the professional group. On the other hand, different perceptions also seem to result of teachers passing from schools of different regions of the country, schools with its human beings particular characteristics, social and physical, that have reflected in the forms to be and the performance of these teachers, as well as the different years of professional experience, that they had finished, inevitably, for defining different ways of understanding the teachers intervention in Physical Education in the perception of school scope.

In any way of our study, it results clearly that self-esteem of the interviewed teachers is sufficiently good and that they are felt capable to provide an education that raises the physical capacity of their pupils, as well as the understanding of the speed and sport activities. In general, the appreciation that makes of its performances alone is harmed by related external factors with the organization of the educative system. In agreement, with the interviewed teachers, independently,

of its antiquity and its initial training, it is not for them that the pertaining to school Physical Education will leave carrying through with the demandable quality. They know what they want and what to do.

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